

Appendix

Sodomy and the Academy

The Assault on the Family and Morality by "Liberation" Ethics

In a recent article ("Our Listless Universities," *National Review*, December 10, 1982), Allan Bloom has given us a brilliant Theophrastian "character" of the life and thought now dominant in the American academy. "I begin with my conclusion," he writes,

students in our best universities do not believe anything, and those universities are doing nothing about it, nor can they.

"Doing nothing" is something of a play on words, since it is nihilism that the universities "do." Professor Bloom concedes that his initial "nothing" is indeed "something," when he says that

The heads of the young are stuffed with a jargon derived from the despair of European thinkers, gaily repackaged for American consumption, and presented as the foundation of pluralism. . . . The new soul's language consists in terms like value, ideology, self, commitment, identity—every word derived from recent German philosophy, and each carrying a heavy baggage of dubious theoretical interpretation of which its users are blissfully unaware. They take such language to be as unproblematic and immediate as night and day. It now constitutes our peculiar common sense.

Some time ago an article was published that might very well have formed the text for Professor Bloom's critique. It appeared in *Current*, which calls itself "The Public Affairs Magazine of Claremont McKenna College," and was written by Professor Steven Smith, my colleague in the Philosophy Department. It was a description by Professor Smith of his very popular course, "Theories of the Good Life," which the editors of *Current* proudly presented as the College's cultural complement to its acknowledged excellence in business economics.

Current went out of its way to draw attention to Professor Smith's article by illustrating the magazine's cover with a Daumier-like cartoon of a character called "Mr. Goodlyfe." Mr. Goodlyfe was praised as representing what the editors said they liked to think of as "the guiding principle" of a CMC education. I wrote an essay about the cartoon and Smith's article about his

course, entitled "Looking at Mr. Goodlyfe." This *Current* refused to publish, but it may be found above in the present volume. The only point that need be repeated here from my previous criticism of Professor Smith is that he himself had declared that he had no idea (that he knew nothing) of what the good life was. He had abandoned any attempt to discover anything about it by reading great books which ostensibly bore upon the question of the good life, e.g., books like the Bible, or books by such authors as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel, Marx, Mill, or Dewey. Studying philosophic books had, he said, only led him into a deep "personal crisis" from which he had emerged to tell his students that they must make up their own minds as to what kinds of lives they ought to lead. He was there to "facilitate" their thinking, but he could say nothing at all as to what they ought to think.

In the new *Current* (Winter/Spring 1983), Professor Smith returns to his theme in his "Reflections on Human Liberation." Although Professor Smith insisted that he did *not* know what the good life was, he is extremely confident in his declarations about human liberation. Here we have a text-book version of that nihilism, derived from recent German philosophy, "gaily repackaged for American consumption," of which Professor Bloom wrote. Here we can see exactly what it is with which the heads of the young are being "stuffed" in "our best universities." Professor Smith's article is instructive, not because it has any significance, either of originality or profundity—since it does not—but because it is so typical of what is being said in so many classrooms.

For Professor Smith, "human liberation" is something of a misnomer. The liberation of which he speaks relates to a "self" or to "selves" which are not identifiably human. Their "genders" appear not to actually belong to them: They are labels affixed by society. The reality of actual human beings, for most of us, however, begins with those we call our mothers and fathers. But "male" and "female" do not appear to be distinctions of nature, or of genuine reality, to Professor Smith. They are instead "roles" which are "stereotyped" by society, and by "social pressure." Human liberation—better called "self" or "selves" liberation—becomes above all emancipation from those stereotyped roles. Human nature, for those of us who believe what our eyes tell us, is partitioned into men and women. Moreover, the differences between men and women are the differences which instruct us in the reality of the whole of nature. For "nature" refers primarily to all those things that have their being by generation and growth. The "natural" things are distinguished from the "artificial" things, the things that are "made" but do not "grow." We human beings are "makers" of things, and we cause our world to be filled with artifacts, some of them wonderful indeed. But we ourselves are not artifacts. We—each of us—grow from fertilized seeds or eggs, whose life is not from any human maker. Man the maker is not the maker of man, because he is not the maker of nature. He has a nature, and he is part of nature. It is the *eros* acting in and through the generation of natural things by which all living things, including human things,

are endowed with vitality. The forms of human life, including the forms of human art, derive their vitality from the vitality that is in nature.

In nature, the distinction between male and female is the most fundamental of all distinctions. It is more fundamental than the distinction between man and beast, more fundamental even than the distinction between man and God. This is because human nature comes to sight as part of nature. And nature comes to sight as the *eros* subsisting in the distinction or partition within the whole of nature, which is grounded in maleness and femaleness. The radical European thought alluded to by Professor Bloom is nihilistic. It denies that we have any genuine knowledge of the external world. It begins with the observation that we have access to that world—if it can be said to exist at all—only by sense perception. Sense perception, however, takes place only internally within us. What we call “sight” refers to images that are confined within the brain. And the brain has no way of “verifying” the character of those images. There is, so to speak, no “on sight inspection” possible, that will confirm or correct the judgment made by the senses of the objects ostensibly sensed. Nihilism begins in the denial of any ground for faith in the reality of sense perception. Nihilism declares that all we can do is to frame hypotheses about a world that is permanently hypothetical. And we can frame these hypotheses, not for the sake of knowledge—which is impossible—but for the sake of power. “Knowledge” becomes the ground and cause of power. It does not consist—as the older view maintained—in comparisons of assertions made about reality with reality itself. Hence traditional morality is an illusion, or delusion, since it is an opinion, or a class of opinions, predicated upon there being a particular class of beings—human beings—among all the beings, with respect to whom norms of conduct are affirmed. A theoretical or contemplative account of the world underlies, and is presupposed by, the moral prescriptions as to how we should act in the world. Nihilism, however, sees moral prescriptions and commandments merely as manifestations of the will, a will that imposes or is imposed upon. Nihilism is essentially non-erotic, because in denying nature it denies the reality that is at the heart of nature, *eros*. Nihilism is moreover non-philosophic, or anti-philosophic. Philosophy means love of wisdom, but the wisdom with which philosophy is concerned, the wisdom for which the philosopher is erotically striving, is wisdom with respect to nature. Nihilism, denying nature, must deny philosophy as well. “Selves” then are not *a priori* human and hence are not *a priori* sons, fathers, brothers, or daughters, mothers, sisters. For the very words, fathers and sons, imply beings bound to each other by duties, by moral bonds, that the nihilist (or liberationist) cannot recognize. Man as a class of beings does not correspond to any idea of man, because there are no ideas, properly so called. There are only unconfirmed impressions. Individual consciousness is only the reaction within ourselves of the domination or subjection that results from collisions that occur in a metaphysical void or abyss. This is the perspective of liberation ethics. In the

traditional morality of western man, it was taught that man was made in the image of God ("male and female created he them") and that he imitated the divine goodness by obeying the divine commandments. Alternatively, it was taught that man was endowed with reason by nature and that, by the right use of reason, he might find out the rules of conduct befitting his nature. In discovering these rules, man would understand why it was good to obey them, and to internalize them. Liberation ethics, as we shall see, places great store by spontaneity. But such spontaneity has nothing in common with that habit of acting well that we call "good character."

Professor Smith is an apostle of freedom, but it is altogether "freedom from." It is altogether different from that unalienable right to liberty esteemed in our Declaration of Independence. For that was based upon a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind." These in turn were based upon "the laws of nature and of nature's God," which elicit no respect from Professor Smith. The laws of nature are in his view grounded in "gender stereotypes," the source of what he finds to be "the most insidious of all forms of tyranny." Taxation without representation is utterly remote from the question of freedom uppermost in his consciousness. Taxation concerns property, property the family, and the family, the morality of genders, which he calls "tyranny." Freedom, for Smith, means not to be held back, or averted from any desired outcome. This means that in the most fundamental respect, Smith is an anarchist. No restraint can be justified intrinsically. Any restraint that is "appropriate" is prudential rather than moral. Certain things "ought not" to be done, from Smith's point of view, only because they get you into trouble, not because they are wrong. Whether he will admit it or not, Smith's argument is an argument for despotism, because the only way in which one can maximize one's desired outcomes is to be more powerful than any of the other selves with whom—or which—one's own self might come into collision. One cannot, within the framework of liberation ethics, distinguish freedom from license, or even attribute to freedom itself anything properly called "goodness." Absence of restraint is desirable, not because it is good, but because it is desired. This tautology may be—indeed it is—absurd. But the nihilist universe is absurd, and the liberation ethicist glories in this absurdity. And so he will speak glowingly—even eloquently—about the terrors of oppression, and of the bright sunlit uplands of liberation, without regard to how base, or even disgusting, the liberated self may be.

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Here is how Smith begins what he calls "a brief excursus into philosophy," for which he himself claims "no originality or novelty."

The root notion of freedom is, I believe, the spontaneous, uninhibited expression of the integrated self. Such a notion presumes that there is a self, as more than

simply a conduit for external forces funneling unaltered through the organism. Such a notion implies agency: the self is naturally active, creative, productive, seeking to engage the world rather than passively reacting.

It is difficult to see what the word "integrated" adds to the word "self" in the first sentence quoted above. Certainly Smith's use of "integrated" is not to be understood in a sense opposed either to "disintegrated" or to "segregated." More important, it has nothing to do with the word "integrity," which refers to the goodness of moral character. A man of integrity is one who can be relied upon, something that can hardly be said of someone who is notable primarily for being "spontaneous" and "uninhibited." Someone of good moral character is not liberated from the moral law: on the contrary, he is bound by it. Being bound by morality—in particular being bound by the obligations pertaining to "gender stereotypes"—is something Smith identifies with oppression.

But what in the world is a "self"? Smith's vocabulary appears to be derived from Kant. By saying that the self is not merely a conduit for external forces, Smith is claiming for it the status of a *noumenon* as distinct from a *phenomenon*: that is to say, it has *freedom* as distinct from being a subject of *determinism*. Freedom, for Kant, meant the ability of a rational being to obey a law that it has given to itself. The categorical imperative, according to Kant, is the form of the will of a rational being. It commands us to act so that the maxim of our will may become a universal law. Liberation ethics, however, would emancipate us from the "social pressures" of "gender stereotypes." The maxim of the will endorsed by Smith with the greatest emphasis is one that would resist the social pressures which engender "homophobia," or fear of homosexuality. By the Kantian formula, one would have to ask, could the maxim of becoming homosexual become a universal law? The answer, of course, is that it could not, without the human race becoming extinct in one generation. This, it seems to me, is something that Kant would hold contradicts the idea of a good will. Smith's claim of freedom for the self is then not Kantian.

Smith does however say that "the self is naturally active, creative, productive." But he gives no substantive meaning to activity, creativity, or productivity. All he can say about what a self does is that it "engages the world," instead of "passively reacting." But what in the world does a free "self" do—or what is it like—when it is actively engaged? At the end of his article, Smith celebrates the consummation of "human liberation" by saying that it means "simply becoming who we are: free to be . . . you and me." (The hiatus between "be" and "you" is Smith's.) Smith collapses the distinction between "being" and "becoming." Because nothing genuinely "is," nothing is prevented from "becoming" anything else. Once one has abandoned the concept of gender, then nothing can be properly said to be engendered, and there is no directedness in becoming. Becoming has taken on an entirely new meaning. In nature, being and becoming are terms correlated with male and female. In a

pre-nihilist universe, it would make no sense to speak of an acorn—or anything else that grows—“becoming what it is.” An acorn is an acorn: but for an acorn to “become” something, is for it to become a sapling and an oak tree. Without the distinction between potentiality and actuality, correlated with male and female, freedom can mean anything—or nothing—and can mean both anything and nothing simultaneously! “What is human liberation?” Smith asks finally. “My answer,” he replies, “is unformed, open, almost empty. . . .” In fact, it *is* empty. In the context of his primary concern, “in the context of sexism,” says Smith, “human liberation means the removal of impediments based simply on sex or gender. . . .” But selves, we remind ourselves, are according to Smith beings whose consciousness has been engendered by their “engagement” with the world. And this engagement, it seems, is nothing but the engagement with impediments. Without the impediments, there would be no engagement; without engagement, no consciousness. The end of engagement is the end of life. Liberation means death.

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Smith continues his “excursus into philosophy” as follows.

The absence of freedom means, therefore, the presence of blocks or limitations that prevent unfettered expressions of the self. In the first instance such blocks are purely external: “I tried to go through the doorway, but he stood in the way”; “I wanted some food, but there was none in the house.” This form of unfreedom . . . may be called objective constraint.

We see that a man standing in a doorway preventing us from going through it is called an “objective constraint.” But there is no such thing as an abstract man standing in an abstract doorway. An actual man in an actual doorway may be a fireman, keeping real people from a burning and collapsing building. Or it may be someone from the bomb squad, keeping others out until the bomb discovered within has been defused or removed to a safe place for detonation. Smith’s “self,” without a gender, is also without a motive. As to the food that is wanted: we may ask, why was there no food in the house? Is the cause poverty? Or is Smith on a diet, and the house was emptied of food to help him stay on his diet? Or perhaps there was a power failure, and the food in the refrigerator was removed to a place where it could be kept from spoiling? Clearly, we cannot characterize hypothetical constraints as actual—or objective—constraints without knowing the motives and circumstances of the agents.

Smith’s “second form of unfreedom” arises, he says,

not from outright blocks or impediments, but from threat. Because we seek to avoid certain outcomes that we find aversive, the prospect of an aversive outcome

is felt as a constraint: "I didn't want to give him the money, but he had a gun"; "I was afraid she'd scream at me if I went home, so I stayed with a friend." This form of unfreedom, in which an actual threat causes me to act differently than I would otherwise prefer to act, is more or less captured by the term intimidation.

Anything that causes me to act differently from the way I would "prefer to act" is, according to Smith, simply and categorically a form of "unfreedom," however base or foolish my preference may be. Concerning preferences, "non est disputandum," says Mr. Goodlyfe. But let us look again at Mr. Smith's examples. Here we see that one man's desired outcome is another man's "aversive outcome." Does not the man behind the gun get what he wants? And why should he not? Perhaps he is a policeman, and the money in Smith's possession has just been stolen from a bank. And who is the woman who would scream at Smith? What in the world has he done to make her want to scream at him?

Clearly, it is not possible to speak intelligently about human liberty, or human liberation, without reference or regard to the ends for the sake of which the liberty itself is desired. The mindlessness of Smith's examples is incomprehensible. No one of ordinary common sense would be deceived by them. Here we are confronted with a trained incapacity to think that is perhaps possible only as a result of a doctorate in philosophy from Harvard. Remembering William F. Buckley, Jr.'s famed aphorism, that it would be better to be governed by the first 200 names in the Boston telephone directory than by the Harvard faculty, one wonders whether it is not just as true that it would be better to be instructed in philosophy by any of these same 200. On the ambiguity of freedom or liberation, apart from the motives of those laying claim to it, we may very profitably contemplate these reflections of Abraham Lincoln, in the midst of the Civil War.

The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people just now [April 1864] are much in want of one. We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing. With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor; while with others the word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor. Here are two, not only different, but incompatible things, called by the same name—liberty. . . . The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as a liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one. Plainly, the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty. . . .

Smith seems incapable of distinguishing the sheep's from the wolf's definition of liberty or liberation.

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Smith refers to a third form of unfreedom as follows.

... since we have a memory for aversive outcomes and can form behavioral habits [sic], we may internalize the external threat and come to govern ourselves by it, even when the threat is not apparent: "I know it's ok, but I'm still afraid to say how I really feel"; "I could never wear that in public."

Once again, Smith abstracts from the external threat and the outcome that the threat averts. If, every time a wolf attacks a sheep, he is beaten by a shepherd, perhaps he will stop molesting sheep. And if, instead of a vulpine sheep molester, we have a human child molester, we can hardly regret the internalization of the external threat, or regard it as a form of unfreedom. Smith says that there is something he knows is ok, but is still afraid to say. But how can anyone properly say that this constitutes unfreedom without first passing judgment upon what it is that he wishes to say? That Smith believes it is ok does not make it ok. Is it ok to falsely shout "Fire" in a crowded theater? How ok is it to speak in support of William Shockley's theories about the genetic inferiority of welfare recipients? How ok is it to speak in support of the authenticity of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion? Or to deny that the Holocaust ever took place? I am confident that Smith himself does not think these things are ok, but he must know that there are others who do think so.

Smith regards as unfreedom the internalization of customs that dictate what we wear. But is this not silly? One would not expect President Reagan to dress for his inauguration the way President Washington dressed for his. But Mr. Reagan does not think the worse of George Washington for having followed the custom of his day. To call such things "inhibitions" and declare them to be forms of unfreedom is preposterous. Are we inhibited in being obliged to observe the rules of the road? Or to refrain from drinking while driving?

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We come to the fourth and final form of unfreedom described by Smith. This is

the experience of aversive outcomes which may condition us so thoroughly that we suppress or deny our inner life and become literally unaware of those impulses in us that have led to unpleasant results in the past: "I'm not angry!"; "I have just no interest in sex." When self-restraint and inhibition have become so complete ... unfreedom may be called simply self-denial.

But how does Smith know that self-denial—in these or in any other instances—is a form of unfreedom? Both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther

King, Jr., believed that the theory and practice of non-violent resistance required the elimination of anger towards the oppressor. And both of them regarded non-violence as a liberating doctrine. Gandhi also believed in the suppression, or sublimation, of the sexual impulses. His belief in this respect was similar to, although not identical with, that of St. Paul who, in I *Corinthians*, praises celibacy as a higher state than matrimony. While I myself agree neither with Gandhi nor with Paul, I would never refer to them as inhibited men. Right or wrong, their powerful convictions were an expression of their freedom, not of servitude.

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Smith concedes that inhibitions—or, more generally, restraints upon the spontaneity of the self—are not always to be characterized negatively or pejoratively. Nevertheless, they are all, in the precise sense, forms of unfreedom in his way of thinking.

It is worth noting [he writes] that despite their pejorative associations, these phenomena of unfreedom are not always inappropriate or wrong. The world is not wholly malleable to our wills, and may often be objectively threatening; thus in order to survive and flourish, we must develop a complete system of self-control and self-restraint. Inhibition is appropriate in the presence of a sleeping tiger—or a menacing street gang.

Smith does not say, or admit in any way, that anything is wrong in itself. He says that some things are “inappropriate or wrong.” But the “or” is only an alternative expression for what is meant as “inappropriate.” Nothing would be wrong, from his perspective, were it not for the fact that “the world is not wholly malleable to our wills.” In Smith’s universe, there are no moral commandments that are categorical, either in the Mosaic (“Thou shalt not . . .”) or in the Kantian sense (“Act so that the maxim of your will may be a universal law . . .”). For Smith, nothing is good in itself unless it is the uninhibited spontaneity of the integrated self. What is called “wrong” is merely what is inopportunist, because it invites the retaliation of someone who may be stronger than you are.

Smith speaks of the prudence properly elicited by “a sleeping tiger” and by “a menacing street gang.” But what about the tiger and the gang? Should they be denied their freedom? Smith tacitly identifies himself with the potential victims; but suppose he represented the strong, instead of the weak, in these examples. What principle would deny him his prey? Would not his “uninhibited spontaneity” properly fulfill itself in a murderous assault? If we recall Lincoln’s analogy of the sheep and the wolf, we must ask why we should—if we are shepherds—prefer the freedom of the sheep to that of the wolf? Since Smith recognizes only “selves,” there is no ground upon which to prefer one self to

another self. Or, perhaps we should say, there is no ground for preferring any other self to one's own self. To identify freedom with the will of a self is to authorize unlimited selfishness. Which self prevails in the jungle of selves will depend then upon who is the stronger. Justice—if one can speak of such a thing, and Smith does not speak of it—is clearly the interest of the stronger. To be as free as possible, one must be as strong as possible. The freest man, clearly, is the tyrant. Smith's argument is an argument for despotism or tyranny. Although the world may not be perfectly malleable, even to a tyrant, it is far more malleable to him than it is to any non-tyrant. If, for example, we compare and contrast the freedom enjoyed by Hitler and Stalin (and the latter, to the end of his days) with that of Churchill and Roosevelt, we would, by Smith's criteria, have to pronounce Hitler and Stalin the freer men by far. Their uninhibited spontaneity was not checked or restrained by constitutions, legislatures, courts, or laws of any kind.

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Smith's article culminates in an attack upon tyranny. But the oppression which concerns him is not that of the death camps or of the Gulag Archipelago. Not the police state, but "sexist" society, is the cause of what he calls "this death of the human spirit." This death, moreover, is caused, not by the Gestapo or the KGB, but "by the dead weight of social pressure." This "oppression . . . is exercised by the strait-jacket of sex role stereotyping." He turns first to the case of women, although it becomes clear that they are not his primary concern.

Solely on the basis of their sex, women are subject to a variety of objective constraints, usually in the form of denied access to benefits and positions that are reserved for men. Also on the basis of their sex women are made vulnerable to intimidation of various kinds, most notably as potential victims of sexual assault. . . .

That women are subject to many constraints because of their sex has, at least traditionally, been true. Parents have, for some reason, tended to worry more about the whereabouts of their teen-age daughters than about their teen-age sons. Smith himself mentions "sexual assault" as the most notable kind of female vulnerability. But it never occurs to him that the basis of this vulnerability is not society, but nature. The reason that women tend to be raped by men, rather than by other women, or that men are seldom (if ever) raped by women, is not something that happens because of sexual stereotyping by social pressure. There is a physical difference between men and women (but not between "selves"), one aspect of which is that men often, if not usually, have the physical and anatomical force with which to commit this act of aggression. What Smith calls "gender stereotyping" is then grounded, not in opinion, but in

nature. The traditional morality which follows from this "stereotyping" is designed to place prudent boundaries upon the freedom of women, for their own protection. But it is also designed to inculcate into the male sex a sense of duty, not only not to abuse women by physical force, but to stand ready at every moment to fight in their defense against anyone who would use force against them. The "gender stereotyping," which Smith identifies with oppression, arose in fact to prevent oppression. Nothing is more deeply engrained in the moral code of all civilized societies—and even of many primitive societies—than the idea of respect for womanhood and the abhorrence of force against women. Smith deplores the "social pressures" by which he finds boys and men to be intimidated if they display "unmasculine" or "effeminate" behavior. But reason, as well as instinct, tells us that an effeminate male cannot, or is not likely, to play the man in the most fundamental of all human duties, the duty of protecting the weak from the depredations of the spontaneous and uninhibited strong. Certainly the importance, and the bearing, of the physical differences between men and women changes with the progress of technology. The ideas of the proper division of labor between men and women ought to change as the economy and society change. But the ultimate ground of "sex role stereotyping" is not society, but nature. This may now be less obvious than it once was, but it is no less true. In protecting women from the unjust aggression of brutal and licentious males, society is protecting its most vital interest, which is in self-preservation. Concerning this last mentioned "self," there is nothing ambiguous or abstract.

Smith objects, even as I object, to the denial of many "benefits and positions" to women. That is to say, it is right for us to object insofar as the positions in question are ones for which women are qualified and are not hazardous to their health or safety. We should bear in mind that the origins of the "welfare state" lie in the factory legislation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was directed towards protecting the health and safety of women and children. We should not, in the name of equal opportunity, remove these protections. We should all object to those denials of equal opportunity in which "stereotypes" become a pretext for unfairness or injustice. As human "selves," we are men and women. But we are also human beings in a sense that transcends the distinction of the sexes. Transcending that distinction is not, however, the same thing as ignoring it. As citizens of a constitutional democracy we—men and women—are entitled to equal rights and equal justice under law. The recognition of the rights to which all citizens are entitled implies the equal recognition of duties by these same citizens. There cannot be a right, in the proper sense, without a corresponding duty to respect that right. The political community is a partnership in the mutual observance of rights and duties. It is therefore a partnership in justice. We cannot speak of freedom—or liberation—except within a framework of justice. Within civil society, within this partnership, no one can have a right to be

spontaneous and uninhibited except in a manner consistent with the equal rights of others, except in a manner consistent with justice. The suppression of spontaneity, the inculcation of proper inhibitions, in the interest of justice cannot and must not be regarded as a form of unfreedom. Restraining ourselves out of recognition of the equal rights of others, and internalizing these restraints until they become unconscious and habitual, is education in virtue. Far from being a form of unfreedom, it is the highest manifestation of freedom in self-governing men and women.

The political community, we say, is a partnership in justice. It is, or can be, such a partnership because, at its basis and foundation, it is a partnership of families. The family is a partnership which springs from the union of man and woman. It does not spring from "selves." It is in the family that future citizens learn to become partners in the larger justice of civil society. This they do by learning to share—by learning to share, not out of weakness, but out of love and respect—and in so sharing to hold in just regard the right and dignity of others. It is in the family that children are taught that life involves work and responsibility as well as play and freedom. They learn that the former is the condition of the latter. Spontaneity and restraint are conjoined as rights are conjoined with duties. The family has its origin in *eros*. And it is bound together in all its dimensions by *eros*. *Eros* not only unites husband and wife, but parents and children, brothers and sisters, ancestors and posterity. But the very *eros* that unites the primeval Adam and Eve places erotic boundaries upon their relationship with others, and of the others with each other, according to different kinds and degrees of propinquity. The prohibitions upon incest and upon sodomy are not primitive superstitions: Reason and nature tell us that without these prohibitions the structure of the family, and of authority within the family, would collapse. Moral education within the family would not be possible, and the family itself would not survive.

The political community is grounded not in *eros* but in *nomos*, not in love but in law. Fellow citizens do not have the natural affection for each other that members of the family may have. Yet something of the *eros* of the family must pass over into the *nomos* of the polity if there is to be a passion for justice. That is why Aristotle says that legislators are even more concerned with friendship than with justice. But where friendship is not learned in the family, it will not be learned in the polity. Fellow-citizens must respect each others' rights, but such respect must be more than a dry abstraction. Men will characteristically respect each other when they are bound together by what they feel most deeply. It is when they look to each other for the defense of their families, above all for the protection of their women and children, that they discover the ground of civic friendship. It is in the bond forged in the common defense and in war that the ground of citizenship in the deepest human passions is discovered. It is then that we discover that we are children of the same "fathers," the fathers of our country, the Founding Fathers, who gave us our laws. In the

phenomenon of patriotism, we see the coming together, the uniting of the *eros* of the family with that of the laws. Only where such a unity occurs can a nation remain free. Only there can the citizens be free. But a people for whom rape, incest, and sodomy are not abhorrent has no moral foundation. It cannot be a people in any proper sense. It will not fight, and it will not survive. The fate of the Cities of the Plain was not due to the vindictiveness of the God of the Bible alone: It was what the fate of all such cities must be under the law of nature.

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Professor Smith's deepest passions are evoked not by what unites mankind into families, but by that "gender stereotyping" which divides male human beings from each other by not permitting them to express their affections towards each other as they would towards members of the opposite sex. Here are his own words on this subject.

Boys and men who display "unmasculine" or "effeminate" behaviors [sic] are frequently the victims of intimidation ... the social pressures of sex-role stereotyping produce in most men a massive body of inhibitions against non-masculine behavior. ... As a result men typically learn to tread a narrow behavioral path, ringed by fearful prospects of humiliation and failure, and maintained by rigid self-control. One of the saddest consequences of this oppressive pattern is the stultification of affection and intimacy among men themselves. Homophobia, the fear of homosexuality, keeps men literally at arms length from one another, denies them mutual nurturance and support, and enforces a lonely fortress mentality.

And further:

The poor health and mortality records of men are related to the stereotypical image of masculinity: men are trained to tune out the complaints of their bodies and their feelings, to shoulder the harness they are expected to wear, and to grind themselves into poor health and early death.

Let us first of all dismiss the most arrant nonsense that lies upon the surface of these assertions. The conclusion of the Camp David agreements was accompanied by a positive orgy of male huggings, first at Camp David itself and later at the ceremonies on the White House lawn. It sometimes seemed that Anwar Sadat, Jimmy Carter, and Menachem Begin would never stop embracing each other and get on with the signing of the treaties. The French or Continental fashion of male kissing on two cheeks, as an alternative to the more restrained Anglo-Saxon style of hand-shaking, seems to have spread all over the international scene in recent years. I must say that I found the spectacle of Jimmy Carter kissing and being kissed by Leonid Brezhnev at the signing of

Salt II, repulsive. Throughout our society, and in most others, fathers and sons, brothers, as well as comrades in arms may without embarrassment express their emotions by embracing. Nowadays, sport teams, both male and female, celebrate victory by those overt expressions which Smith denies take place. Smith speaks of "homophobia," which he calls "fear of homosexuality." This is a vile neologism, which I cannot find in any dictionary. It is ill-formed, since the "homo" that stands opposite to "hetero" refers to "same" in distinction from "other." "Homophobia" would properly mean "fear of sameness," not "fear of homosexuality." Fear of sameness—fear of "unisex"—would I think be a salutary fear. In truth, however, men and women generally do not fear embracing those of the same sex at treaty signings, weddings, funerals, or world series victory celebrations. It is only when the signs of male affection towards male, or of female affections towards female, are understood to point towards, or involve, a sexual consummation that the disapproval results, of which Smith complains. When Smith uses words like "affection *and intimacy*," and "nurturance and support," to characterize a proper relationship among males, he assimilates the relationship of men to each other to that of men and women. This is sodomy, and what it elicits is not so much social disapproval as natural disgust.

It is then the suppression of sodomy to which Smith attributes the oppression concerning which he waxes so eloquent and indignant. One would think he was Solzhenitsyn writing about the Gulag. But to release sodomy from such social constraints as still surround it—and they seem to be fading fast—would be to adopt a neutral attitude toward the family and ultimately toward all morality. To teach that sodomy is nothing but an "alternative sexual preference" and that sodomites represent merely an "alternative life style" is to imply that all moral choice is a matter of idiosyncratic preference. Smith paints a terrible picture of the prison within which men dwell because of their "inhibitions against non-masculine behavior." But the whole idea of moral education is to teach human beings, beginning in earliest childhood, of the necessity of suppressing their anti-social impulses in the interest of friendship and justice. No impulse is conceivable which is more anti-social than that towards sodomy. As we noted in our discussion of the categorical imperative, the consummation of sodomy implies the suicide of humanity. But Smith's argument would run athwart many other forms of behavior that are condemned by the moral law. There is nothing in any of his premises which would condemn incest any more than sodomy. Indeed, if the Oedipus (and Electra) complexes represent our deepest and most repressed urges, as some psychoanalysts tell us, then incest rather than sodomy would be the most prototypical form of human freedom. As we have already noted, the argument for the perfectly spontaneous and uninhibited self, the self that is limited only by the non-malleability of the world, is an argument for tyranny. This tyranny might manifest itself not only in sodomy and incest, but in rape and murder. We know

from the melancholy annals of the police blotters that there are mass murderers both of young boys and of young women who find that they have uncontrollable cravings that can be gratified only by the rapes and murders of their victims. This may even be followed by posthumous assaults. I am not suggesting or implying in any way that Smith advocates or condones any such behavior. But I do not see any ground in his premises for distinguishing as forms of unfreedom the unsated urges of sodomites from those of the incestuous, the child molesters, the rapists, the murderers, or the necrophiliacs. If the inhibition of any spontaneity of any self is a form of unfreedom, then each and every form of self-denial, each and every successful effort at the suppression of vice, becomes a form of unfreedom.

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I know that an apology will be demanded of me for paying such extended attention to such a bad piece of writing as Professor Smith's "Reflections on Human Liberation." No one, it will be said, reads house organs like *Current*. However true this may be, Smith's article reveals something fundamental about the kind of liberal education that is being offered today "in our best universities." It is in the liberal arts colleges of such universities that the elite among our youth are given the education that presumably qualifies them for the positions of leadership they will soon occupy. The parents who are making such heavy sacrifices to send their children to these colleges sometimes have a very erroneous impression of what goes on in them—even when they themselves have gone to the same schools a generation ago. It is fortunate that perhaps 90% of the instructional and study time of the average undergraduate is spent in courses which are either cramming him with facts or training him in technique. There are only a small number of courses in which education properly so called takes place, in which the mind of the student can be said to undergo training in making decisions that bear upon the ends of life, upon the kind of life that one ought to lead, and upon what kind of a man or woman the student will become. Courses taught by the likes of Professor Smith may constitute 90% of that 10%. Here then is where the corruption of liberal education makes its mark upon the minds and hearts of the young.

Professor Bloom complained that today the young do not read the great books as, let us say, Marlborough or Lincoln or Churchill read Shakespeare to comprehend the actions and passions of mankind and to find guidance in that comprehension for their own actions and passions. But for Shakespeare, or for any other great author, to be important to the students, something of infinite importance to Shakespeare himself must also be important to them. That something is nature. Someone who does not know, or greatly care, what kind of a man his own father was will make light reading of *Hamlet*. Nor will he think much or deeply of "Our fathers" who "brought forth on this continent a new

nation. . . ." Growing up in the United States today is far more difficult than at any time in my lifetime, or at any time since I began teaching college students in 1945. It is hard for the young to make wise decisions about their lives, because the old moral apothegms are not being updated, they are being ridiculed and scorned. And that most ancient and powerful of all guidelines, nature itself, is being called factitious and immaterial. Yet I do not despair of the future. For we can still take comfort with the ancient Roman poet that no matter how often nature is expelled with a pitchfork, it will always return. Meanwhile, however, the lives of many of our children are being ruined by false prophecy. That is a tragic loss, and one that we ought not—that we cannot—continue to abide.